

TOP SECRET

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GENERAL

1. Norway to delay reply to Soviet pact proposal--The Norwegian Foreign Office has informed US Ambassador Bay that Norway will "take its time" in replying to the Soviet proposal for a non-aggression pact. The Foreign Office reportedly indicated that time will be needed to study Norway's obligations under the UN and other international commitments. Bay expresses the judgment that Norwegian public opinion strongly favors joining a North Atlantic Pact but the Government's generally cautious attitude suggests an extreme desire to keep its party ranks intact before embarking on a course which will irreversibly align Norway with the western powers.

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Soviet aggression against Norway held unlikely--US Embassy Moscow suggests that a Norwegian refusal now to join the Atlantic Pact will present problems for both the US and Norway. The Embassy considers that if Norway refuses, Soviet propaganda will be able to exploit this refusal as proof of the aggressive character of the Atlantic Pact. The Embassy adds that other prospective participants may conclude that the Pact has not been adequately planned to provide effective security. The Embassy is convinced that the Kremlin will limit its retaliation to propaganda and hostile economic and political maneuvers and that no "disastrous consequences" will follow a Norwegian decision to join the Atlantic Pact.

EUROPE

2. GERMANY: UK urges prompt west German settlement-- According to US Embassy London, British Foreign Minister Bevin believes that further delays in settling the west German question will result in "extremely grave consequences" for the western powers.

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